

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for use in lossy compression of image data, the method comprising:

5 selecting more than one image from a plurality of images; and
creating a composite image which comprises the selected
images,
wherein, for at least one of the selected images, lossy
compression of the composite image results in improved compressibility.

10 2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein improved
compressibility is determined at least in part by comparing an image's
compressibility when compressed separately and the image's compressibility
when compressed as part of the composite image.

15 3. A method according to Claim 2, wherein improved
compressibility is determined at least in part on an aggregate improvement,
which is an aggregate of an improvement measure associated with each of the
selected image.

20 4. A method according to Claim 3, wherein image
selection is determined based at least in part on the aggregate improvement.

5. A method according to Claim 2, wherein image selection is based at least in part on achieving some number of images whose composite compressibility value is greater than its individual compressibility value.

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6. A method according to Claim 1, wherein selecting a plurality of images further comprises:

obtaining, for each of the plurality of images, an individual compressibility value that specifies a measure of quality resulting from separately compressing the image at a given rate of compression; and

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selecting from the plurality of images based at least in part on the individual compressibility value.

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7. A method according to Claim 6, wherein image selection is further based on image size.

8. A method according to Claim 6, wherein image selection is further based on composite image size.

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9. A method according to Claim 6, wherein each image is compressed using more than one compression rate, and wherein more than one individual compressibility value is associated with each image.

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12. A method according to Claim 11, wherein each of the plurality of images are individually compressed multiple times using different rates of compression.

13. A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:
determining a minimum compression rate for the composite
image.

5 14. An apparatus for use in lossy compression of image
data, said apparatus comprising means for performing the functions specified
in any of Claims 1 to 13.

10 15. An apparatus comprising:
a program memory for storing process steps executable to
perform a method according to any of Claims 1 to 13; and
a processor for executing the process steps stored in said
program memory.

15 16. Computer-executable process steps stored on a
computer readable medium, said computer-executable process steps for use in
lossy compression of image data, said computer-executable process steps
comprising process steps executable to perform a method according to any of
Claims 1 to 13.

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